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THREE *PUER*-SCENES IN PLAUTUS, AND THE
DISTRIBUTION OF RÔLES

By HENRY W. PRESCOTT

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THREE *PUER*-SCENES IN PLAUTUS, AND THE
DISTRIBUTION OF RÔLES

BY HENRY W. PRESCOTT

THE rule of three actors in the classical Greek drama has recently been severely tested. Such a restriction may well have been imposed upon managers of travelling troupes.¹ In the Roman comedies a larger number of actors is required, if our texts represent the acting versions of the plays. Ancient evidence, so far as it goes, is in accord with the requirements of the text. After sifting this external evidence, Schmidt² in 1870 arranged possible distributions of parts in the plays of Plautus and Terence; in his arrangements he considered almost exclusively coincident appearances of speaking characters upon the stage. Schmidt's results have been generally accepted as showing the practicability of producing the extant comedies with a small number of actors, varying from three to seven in the different plays. The opinion of conservative scholars, probably, finds expression in Hauler's comment on Dziatzko's cautious statement of the case (Ter. *Phormio*³, 34, n. 4): "Untersuchungen wie von Friedr. Schmidt . . . hält Dziatzko insofern für wertvoll, als dadurch festgestellt wird, mit wie vielen Personen ein Stück durchgeführt werden konnte Daraus auf eine feste Regel und etwaige Selbstbeschränkung der lateinischen Dichter bei Komposition ihrer Stücke zu schliessen, wagt er [Dziatzko] mit Recht nicht."³

¹ Rees, *The So-called Rule of Three Actors in the Classical Greek Drama*, 64 ff.

² *Ueber die Zahl der Schauspieler bei Plautus und Terenz und die Vertheilung der Rollen unter dieselben*, Erlangen, 1870. Recent discussions of the theme are limited to Terence, and particularly in connection with the *notae personarum*; for references cf. Dziatzko-Hauler, Ter. *Phormio*³, 34, n. 4.

³ This scepticism was less conservatively expressed in Lorenz's review of Schmidt (*Philol. Anz.* V [1873], 459 ff.), and by Steffen in *Acta Soc. Phil. Lips.* II, 114 ff. Their contention is that the whole question is invalidated by the fact that we cannot discriminate between the Greek original and the Roman adaptation. I think that it is quite proper to study our texts as they stand, and then discover if the scenes in question are demonstrably Greek or Roman. In the present case the conclusion may seem negative, but such evidence as there is seems to me to point to Roman sources for the three scenes under discussion. Cf. below, p. 36, n. 3; p. 39, n. 2; p. 45 and nn. 1, 3.

Audacious as it may be, the thought will occur to any student of the drama that plays produced by a limited number of actors may reveal in their composition the effects of this limitation, especially if the playwright is a craftsman of very moderate ability. And even a consummate artist may at times be forced to make concessions which his art cannot conceal. The consideration of the plays from this standpoint is not only not audacious, but essential to a proper appreciation of the question. The audacity consists in drawing conclusions from insufficient evidence, and this is all that Hauler means. Naturally students of the Greek drama have sought confirmation of the rule of three actors in the structure of the tragedies;¹ perhaps they have seen too much, but, granting the theory, their attitude was justifiable. Schmidt, on the contrary, makes no account of internal evidence in this sense of the term: he does quote *Poen.* 123, 126 (*ego ibo, ornabor; . . . ibo, alius nunc fieri volo*), but one of the two verses is probably the work of a *retractator*, and at best the passage proves only that the *prologus* did not require a separate actor; Schmidt also speculates (p. 9) as to what Plautus could not do—he could not present dramatically the joy of the wives in the *Stichus* over the return of their husbands, because two actors carried the four rôles, nor could he let the audience see the reconciliation of the father and the son in the *Bacchides*, if one actor played both parts; such speculation is of negative value, and tends to indulgence in idle fancies. What kind of internal evidence is available for our purpose?

On p. 13 Schmidt (accepting the rule of three actors for the Greek drama) remarks that the presence of the chorus in the classical tragedy and comedy facilitated change of rôles; in the later Greek drama, he adds, the chorus disappeared; more characters have to appear, “und so mehrere Zwischenscenen entstehen”; new actors appear in these “Zwischenscenen,” and the other actors have an opportunity to change rôles. We now know that the chorus did not entirely disappear from the later comedy, and perhaps traces of it survive even in Roman comedy,² but Schmidt’s statement of the case applies as an *a priori* description to our plays. A skilful dramatist, if limited to a few actors,

¹ Cf., for example, Elmsley in *Class. Jour.* VIII (1813), 433 ff.

² For survivals of the chorus, and substitutes for it, cf. Leo, *Der Monolog im Drama*, 43, 44; 44, nn. 1 and 2; 50, n. 6; 59, n. 2.

will so arrange his scenes as to provide for the shifting of rôles, and often without much difficulty. The ease with which it may be accomplished is clear enough, if Schmidt’s thesis is accepted, from the comedies. In fact, a dramatist is so little hampered by the necessity of distributing a dozen rôles among half a dozen actors that internal conditions need seldom reveal indisputable cases of concession to this economical device. For we may not accept evidence unless it proves that the rôles *must* have been distributed: the mere possibility has been demonstrated by Schmidt. Accordingly, the “Zwischenscenen” must be of a very peculiar character to serve our purpose; any play given by a complete cast with a single rôle for each actor may show “Zwischenscenen” of the same sort as most of those in Roman comedy—for any dramatist will be likely to arrange a certain amount of alternation in the appearance of characters or groups of characters. If, however, we can discover scenes or passages peculiar in the sense that no reasonable explanation of their peculiarities exists outside of the limitation imposed by a small troupe, such evidence will be of primary value.

Such evidence, if discovered, will be quite independent of external evidence and of Schmidt’s entire thesis. But if the evidence of primary importance is convincing, we may properly take up secondary evidence: that is, we may now assume Schmidt’s arrangements of rôles to be correct, and proceed to test them. This seems an obvious thing to do; yet Schmidt made no effort in this direction. He tested them only with reference to coincident appearances, referring occasionally to harmony of rôles. But simple practical tests are at hand. If in a given play Schmidt thinks there were five actors in the cast, and if in a succession of two scenes, one requires five speaking rôles, and the other a rôle not included in the five, the structure must reveal the opportunity given to change rôles. If in the same play in a succession of two scenes one requires four parts and the other three parts distinct from the four, Schmidt’s theory is immediately tested. Now such conditions do exist in the plays; the cases are not many in number, but they all corroborate the general theory of a limited number of actors, and either correct or confirm, to some extent, Schmidt’s arrangements of rôles. It should be remembered, however, that such evidence or tests never carry us beyond the standpoint of Dziatzko. Only the primary evidence, if it is convincing to others as it is to me, will lead us to modify

Dziatzko's conservatism as Hauler interprets it. If my conclusions are correct, internal evidence shows that the *Miles Gloriosus*, the *Captivi*, and the *Pseudolus* were in their present form intended for production by a relatively small number of actors; Dziatzko's (or Hauler's) "could have been produced" becomes in these three cases "must have been produced." Furthermore, the evidence in these three cases shows that the author of any one of these plays in its present form (whether Plautus or not I do not yet care to say) was subjected to a certain "Selbstbeschränkung." This is the important point, not that the rôles were distributed among a few actors, but that the present form of the Latin comedies was affected by this concession to economy.

I

The last two acts of the *Miles* are parts of a harmonious whole. No theory of contamination¹ seriously affects their integrity. In them the second and final intrigue against the *miles* is successfully accomplished. A fictitious wife of Periplectomenus is represented to have fallen in love with the *miles*; the new affair necessitates the withdrawal of the former sweetheart, Philocomasium — an issue which satisfies her lover, Pleusicles, and the arch-intriguer, Palaestrio. The fourth act carries the intrigue up to the catastrophe; the fifth act reveals the catastrophe. In the action of the fourth act two circumstances are of importance in our present study. In the first place, Milphidippa, posing as the servant of the wife, is clearly presented as a go-between; it is she who makes the advances in IV, 2, and brings him a ring from the wife (1048-9); in IV, 6 she appears with the wife as her confidante; in both places her part is important, and her activity the conventional rôle of the servant or nurse in Hellenistic love-stories. In the second place, an important fact comes out in her words in 1277; the *miles* inquires how he is to gratify his new sweetheart when her husband is still in the field; *quin tua caussa exegit virum ab se*, is the servant's answer; there is, then, no obstacle to the new amour save the presence of Philocomasium. Act IV, 8 removes this obstacle; in this scene Philocomasium, Pleu-

¹ Cf. Leo, *Plaut. Forsch.*, 161 ff., and the references in n. 3, adding Hasper, *de compositione Militis Gloriosi*, *Festschrift d. 44. Versammlung deutsch. Phil. und Schulm.*, pp. 335 ff., Dresden, 1897, and Kakridis, *Rh. Mus.*, 59 (1904), 626.

sicles, Palaestrio, and Pyrgopolinices appear; the first two retire at v. 1353; the *miles*, left behind with Palaestrio, expresses his appreciation of the slave's services, and is with difficulty persuaded not to retain Palaestrio in his employ; Palaestrio retires in v. 1373. In 1373-6 the *miles* soliloquizes further on Palaestrio's faithfulness; he then says: *ibo hinc intro nunciam ad amores meos* (1376-7). The action thus far makes it quite natural that he should immediately carry out this purpose, but instead of doing so he hears the noise of an opening door: a *puer* appears, and the following scene (IV, 9) takes place:

PVER PYRGOPOLINICES

Pv. ne me moneatis: memini ego officium meum;
ego † nam † conueniam illum, ubi ubist gentium;
inuestigabo, operae non parco meae. 1380
Pv. me quaerit illic: ibo huic puero obuam.
Pv. ehem, te quaero: salue, uir lepidissime,
cumulate commoditate, praeter ceteros
duo di quem curant. Pv. qui duo? Pv. Mars et Venus.
Pv. facetum puerum. Pv. intro te ut eas opsecrat: 1385
te uolt, te quaerit teque expectans expetit.
amanti fer opem. quid stas? quin intro is? Pv. eo. —
Pv. ipsus illic sese iam inpediuit in plagas.
paratae insidiae sunt: in statu stat senex,
ut adoriatur moechum, qui formast ferox, 1390
qui omnis se amare credit, quaeque aspexerit
mulier: eum oderunt qua uiri qua mulieres.
nunc in tumultum ibo: intus clamorem audio.

The next scene (V, 1) requires four speaking characters, the largest number required in any scene of the play; they are Periplectomenus, Pyrgopolinices, Cario, and a *lorarius*; in 1427 a fifth appears, Sceledrus.

What is the purpose of the *puer*-scene (IV, 9)? Its function is clear in one respect: the action requires that the *miles* shall retire into the house of Periplectomenus, that a short period of time shall elapse thereafter to provide for the dénouement of V, 1; this lapse of time is covered by the monologue of the *puer* in 1388-93. To provide this

monologue the *puer* is brought upon the stage in 1378-87. Otherwise the scene is immaterial to the action. But at once the question arises: why is a *puer* employed for this purpose? He appears nowhere else in the play. Furthermore, the part of go-between which he plays here has already been clearly defined as the rôle of Milphidippa. No explanation of this duplication of parts is available, save the fact that the actor who played the rôle of Milphidippa was needed for one of the characters that appeared in the first scene of the fifth act.¹ This character could not have been Periplectomenus (unless, as Schmidt thinks, a supernumerary took Milphidippa's silent part in III, 3) or the *miles* (for Milphidippa and the *miles* appear together in other scenes); the part either of Cario or of the *lorarius*, however, might have been combined with the rôle of Milphidippa.² Our study makes impossible Schmidt's (reluctant) assignment of the *puer* and Milphidippa to one actor.³

¹ It might be objected that I have proved at best only that the scene-heading should read *Milphidippa* instead of *Puer*; but this summary dismissal of the peculiarities of the scene will not seem so plausible when we find two other *puer*-scenes in which no such solution is possible.

² The structure of the scene preceding the *puer*-scene seems to make further provision for changes: Philocomasium and Pleusicles retire in 1353; after a stationary scene Palaestrio retires in 1373; the *puer*-scene gives Palaestrio time to change his rôle; that is, the structure, perhaps, releases three of the cast that they may take new rôles in V, 1. Note also that the appearance of Sceledrus in 1427 would enable the *puer* to take that part unless the *puer* remained on the stage after 1393: *nunc in tumultum ibo* (1393) seems to point to his withdrawal. Most of this, however, is secondary evidence.

³ Schmidt (*op. cit.*, 31) assigns Periplectomenus, Milphidippa, and the *puer* to one actor, regardless both of the conditions described above and also of the fact that the *puer* and Periplectomenus appear in successive scenes. This latter combination he would, presumably, justify on the ground that the end of an act intervenes; this assumption of a pause between acts he uses elsewhere for similar purposes. But in many cases the assumption is demonstrably false. As everybody knows the act-divisions are late; the theory of acts is also late; there is, however, a possibility, supported by the historical development of the form, that the structure of the action was affected by the *μέρη*, the parts that resulted during and after the disappearance of the chorus ("Es unterliegt aber gar keinem Zweifel und wird durch die dramatische Technik aller Zeiten bestätigt, dass für die Führung der Handlung die Sonderung der Teile etwas wesentliches ist"; Leo, *Der Monolog*, 51). The assumption of a pause between acts, or *μέρη*, according to Leo's divisions, rests largely on *Pseud.* 573^a,

II

The mere statement of the case for the *Miles* may not be convincing; if, however, all *puer*-scenes of this type (that is, in which a *puer* appears as a speaking character without contributing to the action and without serving any purpose outside the scene in question) lead us to the same conclusion, the argument is materially strengthened. There are only two other *puer*-scenes in our sense of the term in Plautus: the *puer* of *Bacch.* Frag. X (XVII) is an invention of the editors, and in any case the fragmentary passage does not admit discussion of the *puer*'s rôle; Paegnium in the *Persa* is a *puer* according to the scene-headings of D (cf. 193), but the scenes (II, 2, 4) are essential to the action; the *puer* in *Poen.* 1141 is an invention of Angelius, and speaks only an incidental word or two; Pinacium in the *Stichus* is a *puer* according to the scene-headings in B and D in II, 1, and in D in II, 2 (cf. 270), but contributes to the action; in the *Mostellaria* Sphaerio *puer* (cf. 419) appears in the scene-heading of D after v. 407, but he has only two verses and plays a small part in the action. As *puer*-scenes there remain only *Captivi*, IV, 4, and *Pseudolus*, III, 1.

The action of the *Captivi* has reached the point where Hegio's distress at having released Philocrates is unexpectedly relieved by the news that Philocrates has returned, bringing the son, Philopolemus, and

which points to a musical interlude. Such an interval as that in *Asin.* 809-10 seems to require either a pause between scenes (unless there is a lacuna) or a dance or music. Note also Ter. *Andria* 171-2, unless Simo remains on the stage. All these situations naturally remind us of the *χορός* in the New Greek Comedy as revealed in the text of Menander. How did the Roman writers manage the situation when the stage was left vacant by the text of their Greek originals except for the *χορός*, which was not so easily available in the Roman comedies? *Curc.* 462 ff. and *Capt.* 461 ff. show situations similar to those in the *Asin.* and *Andria* with the gaps filled by stationary scenes; is this Plautine, or at least Roman, technique, or were there such scenes in the Greek original (cf. p. 39, n. 2)? In any case is it not clear that we have no right to assume pauses unless the text forces it upon us? Finally it is to be noted that the *puer*-scenes discussed above make untenable a theory of pause of any appreciable length between the acts in these three cases; for all justification for the scenes disappears as soon as we assume a pause between the acts which would have in itself sufficed for changing rôles. On the whole matter of acts, *μέρη*, etc., cf. Leo, *Plaut. Forsch.*, 205 ff., *Der Monolog*, 28; 49 ff.; 44 and n. 2; 50 and nn. 5 and 6; 57, n. 3; 59, n. 2.

a slave, Stalagmus; the bearer of this news is the parasite Ergasilus (IV, 2). Hegio must go at once to the harbor to see his son. As a reward he gives Ergasilus the freedom of the pantry, and leaves the stage at v. 900. Ergasilus, before going into Hegio's house, anticipates in a monologue the joy of devastating the larder (901-908). He then goes into the house; perhaps a short interval follows, covered by the crash of platters within (Lindsay, *ad loc.*); then a *puer* comes out from the house of Hegio and describes the havoc Ergasilus is making within (IV, 4):

PVER

Diespiter te dique, Ergasile, perdant et uentrem tuum
parasitosque omnis et qui posthac cenam parasitis dabit. 910
clades calamitasque, intemperies modo in nostram aduenit domum.
quasi lupus essuriens metui ne in me faceret inpetum.
ubi voltus . . sur . . ntis . . . impetum. 912a
nimisque hercle ego illum male formidabam, ita frendebat dentibus.
adueniens deturbavit totum cum carni carnarium:
arripuit gladium, praetruncavit tribus tegoribus glandia; 915
aulas calicesque omnis confregit, nisi quae modiales erant.
coquom percontabatur possentne seriae feruescere.
cellas refregit omnis intus recclisitque armarium.
adservate istunc, sultis, servi. ego ibo ut conveniam senem,
dicam ut sibi penum aliud [ad]ornet, siquidem sese uti volet; 920
nam hic quidem ut adornat aut iam nihil est aut iam nihil erit.

The *puer* goes off to find Hegio. In the next scene (V, 1) Hegio appears with Philocrates, Philopolemus, and Stalagmus; Stalagmus does not speak until v. 955, but is present from the beginning of the scene. The number of rôles required is the largest demanded by any scene in the play.

A partial justification for the *puer*-scene is at once available. Obviously the interval between Hegio's departure (900) and his return (922) must be filled; the action of the play has advanced too far to develop any feature of the plot; the only recourse is a stationary scene or scenes; accordingly the monologue of Ergasilus and that of the *puer* appear to fill the interval. But why the monologue of the *puer*? He

appears nowhere else in the play.¹ Why should not the monologue of Ergasilus be expanded to twenty-two verses, instead of dividing the stop-gap between two characters, the second of whom is of no service elsewhere in the play? The poet is not usually averse to expanding indefinitely a parasite's monologue: witness III, 1 of this play (cf. *Men.* 446 ff.)—there again the interval of Hegio's absence (460-498) must be filled, and Ergasilus soliloquizes for thirty-seven verses. Clearly the *puer*-scene calls for further explanation. The fact that it takes the place of an extension of Ergasilus's monologue suggests the explanation: the actor who played the rôle of Ergasilus was needed for one of the characters that appeared in the first scene of the fifth act; the *puer*-scene gives Ergasilus time to change his rôle.²

III

It has probably not escaped the reader's notice that these two *puer*-scenes come at the end of the fourth act, just before a scene in which the largest number of actors is required; that is, no other scenes of the two plays require more than four speaking characters. We are not to infer that the troupe consisted of four actors, but it is significant that as the playwright approaches the conclusion of his play the difficulties of concealing his concession to economy are greatest; the threads of the plot have run out; stationary scenes and a *puer ex machina* are his

¹ Weise, *die Komödien des Plaut.* kritisch nach Inhalt und Form beleuchtet, 76 (as quoted by Langen, *Plaut. Stud.*, 123), rejects the *puer*-scene because the *puer* does not appear again, and does not here promote the action. Langen, *l. c.*, properly demurs, reminding us that the entire rôle of Ergasilus is immaterial to the action, but that the authenticity of his speeches is not open to question.

² Schmidt, *op. cit.*, 24: "Endlich ist noch der schnurrige Parasit Ergasilus und der verschmitzte Sklave Stalagmus für den vierten Schauspieler übrig; . . ." Note the harmony of rôles.

Leo (*Der Monolog*, 59 and n. 2) appreciates some of the features: he compares the parasite's monologue in 461 ff. and suggests that the two monologues of the parasite, like the speech of the *choragus* in the *Curculio*, take the place of a χοροῦ in the Greek original; the *choragus*-scene, he says, is positively Roman; the monologue in *Capt.* 461 ff. has no Attic coloring, and shows a Roman source in 476, 489; the monologue of the *puer* is neutral. This suggestion gains in force when we remember that the part played by the *puer* in the dramatic economy of the piece has no analogy in Euripides or in Greek comedy.

only resort. The third *puer*-scene, however, shows that this is not the only condition that led a playwright to reveal the limitation imposed upon him: a small troupe offers little variety in the way of physical or temperamental peculiarities; the shift of rôles in the *Pseudolus* was probably occasioned by the fact that one actor was especially adapted to two similar rôles.¹

The *Pseudolus*, like the *Miles*, is a victim of the contamination-theory.² In this case we cannot escape some consideration of this factor. I think, however, that it will be clear that my argument is not affected by any theory of contamination so long as I am not as yet raising the question of the authorship of any of these scenes.

Act I, 2, Ballio, a *leno*, is on his way to the market-place (163); he is attended by a *puer* (170, 241, 242, 249, 252, 263), who does not speak in the course of the second and third scenes. In the following scenes, up to the beginning of act III, the intrigue is partially developed. At the end of the second act (II, 4), after a short monologue, Pseudolus goes to the market-place (764). At the beginning of the third act a *puer* appears, and delivers the following monologue (767-789):

PUER

quoî seruitutem di danunt lenoniam
puero, atque eidem si addunt turpitudinem,
ne illi, quantum ego nunc corde conspicio meo,
malam rem magnam multasque aerumnas danunt. 770
velut haec mihi euenit seruitus, ubi ego omnibus
paruis magnisque miseriis praefulcior:
neque ego amatorem mihi inuenire ullum queo
qui amet me, ut curer tandem nitidiuscule.
nunc huic lenoni hodiernis natalis dies: 775
interminatust a minimo ad maxumum,
siquis non hodie munus misisset sibi,
eum cras cruciatu maxumo perbitere.

¹ The importance of this factor has been interestingly elaborated by Rees, *op. cit.*, 53 ff.

² Bierma, *Quaestiones de Plautina Pseudolo*, 1897. Leo, *Nachrichten d. Göttingen Ges.*, 1903. Karsten, *Mnemosyne*, 31 (1903), 130.

nunc nescio hercle rebus quid faciam meis:
neque ego illud possum quod illi qui possunt solent. 780
nunc, nisi lenoni munus hodie misero,
cras mihi potandus fructus est fullonius.
eheu, quam illae rei ego etiam nunc sum paruolus.
atque edepol ut nunc male malum metuo miser,
si quispiam det qui manus grauior siet, 785
quamquam illud aiunt magno gemitu fieri,
comprimere dentes uideor posse aliquo modo.
sed comprimenda est mihi uox atque oratio:
erus eccum recipit se domum et ducit coquom.

It will be noticed that this *puer* does not announce whence he comes; his concluding words (788-789) do not show whether he goes off, or remains on the stage. If we had the scene without its context we should certainly suppose that the *puer* came out from the house of Ballio in 767, and retired into it in 789, after announcing his master's approach. In the next scene (III, 2) Ballio returns from the market-place with a cook; the scene-headings in B and D represent a *puer* as present in this scene; in 855-864 of this scene Ballio addresses somebody, evidently a slave; inasmuch as in Act I, 2 he was attended by a *puer*, it is reasonable to suppose that the person addressed is the *puer* of I, 2. In vv. 891-892 somebody says: *quin tu is accubitus, et convivas cedo, corrumpitur iam cena*. These words are assigned by Bothe and all recent editors to the *puer*; B C D assign them, wrongly (cf. 893), to the cook. In the following scene (IV, 1) Pseudolus returns.

The first question is: is the *puer* of I, 2 identical with the *puer* of III, 1? Clearly the birthday-motif of I, 2 is resumed in III, 1. It is quite conceivable that this motif is a weak echo from one of the plays used in the process of contamination. Again it is quite conceivable that III, 1 is an interpolation in which the interpolator has clumsily availed himself of the birthday-motif suggested in I, 2; it does not follow that the *puer* is the *puer* of I, 2; if this was the intention of the interpolator he has strangely neglected to make clear the identity; the language of the *puer* in III, 1 certainly suggests that he simply comes out of Ballio's house at the opening of the scene and retires at the close of the same scene. Finally we must admit, I think, that it is reasonable

to suppose that the *puer* of I, 2 is the person addressed in 855 ff.¹ The action of I, 2 and of III, 2 is consistent, and the characters in the two scenes belong to one consistent line of action: Ballio goes off to the market with a *puer* to provide for his birthday-party (cf. 165-169), and in III, 2 returns with the *puer* and the cook. With this action III, 1 is imperfectly connected.

But, however these questions are answered, I simply start with the assumption that the present text represents an acting version of a play produced in Plautus's time or later: in this acting version what is the *raison d'être* of the *puer*-scene, III, 1?

In 1858 Sauppe² noted that both III, 1 and 2 are not connected with the action of the play, and offered as an explanation the desire of the poet to amuse the populace. Lorenz,³ much more properly, ex-

¹ Leo, however (critical note on 767), objects: ". . . versus 855 sq. ad puerum hac aetate non quadrant, cf. 170, 241." I admit that I hardly understand the objection or the references. V. 170 (*i, puere, prae; ne quisquam pertundat cruminam cautios!*), if it means that the *puer* is in any way a protection against thieves, would seem to be in harmony with the directions of 855 ff. If Leo means merely to include both passages as evidence that the action is suggestive of an older person, I cannot follow him. If Leo is simply defending his theory of interpolation, I fully agree with him to this extent: the *puer* is a *puer delicatus* (773 ff.) in III, 1, and to some extent his age is thereby defined; but the *puer* of I, 2 and III, 2 is simply the *παῖς* of Greek comedy, and the action assigned to him in I, 2 and in III, 2 is appropriate for a young and probably sturdy slave whose age is not defined precisely by the term *puer* in a technical sense. Lorenz seems to me to be altogether correct (*Philol.*, 35 [1876], 173), in speaking of the *puer* of III, 1: "der *puer* hat sonst gar nichts im Stücke zu thun; denn der 855 angeredete ist der *pedisequos* Ballio's."

² *Quaestiones Plautinae*, 8: "Haec vero scena et quae sequitur cum fabulae totius argumento parum cohaerent nec si deessent desiderarentur. Sed, nisi fallor, et similis huius *puer* et *coquus* in alia fabula, an dicam in pluribus, plebeculae ita placuerant, ut poeta personas spectatoribus gratissimas etiam huic fabulae risu captandi causa praeter necessitatem adderet."

³ *Pseudolus*, Einl. 12: "Die hierzu nöthige Zwischenzeit wird in der Oekonomie des Stückes ausgefüllt durch zwei episodische Scenen . . ." Cf. *ibid.*, 24.

Ibid., 24, n. 23: "So nothwendig und gut angebracht diese Scene [III, 2] ist, so wenig nothwendig und so schlecht ausgeführt erscheint die siebente [III, 1]. Es ist nicht abzusehen, was den Plautus bewogen haben sollte, nach der im ersten Canticum [I, 2] gegebenen grossen Schilderung der Zustände im Hause des *leno*, noch eine ganz unmotivirte Fortsetzung derselben hier zu geben, und zwar eine der widerlichsten Art. Der *puer* ist sofort nach derselben wieder verschollen: denn der 833 [= 855]

plained the two scenes as a stop-gap to fill the interval of time between Pseudolus's departure (766) and his return (905); and with even greater propriety noted that this justification could not apply to the *puer*-scene; he declares that III, 1 is an unpardonable repetition of the description of conditions in the *leno*'s house already given in I, 2, and says that he should be glad to believe that the entire *puer*-scene is a later interpolation by an actor's hand to please the audience. Leo (critical note on 767) agrees that it is an interpolation "*ut in actione in vicem succederet scaenae I, 2.*"¹ Several accepted facts are important in our study: a stop-gap to fill the interval of time is necessary—that is furnished sufficiently by III, 2; the desire to amuse the audience by stationary cook-scenes is characteristic both of the New Greek Comedy and of Plautus—but the *puer*-scene supplies no such entertainment. All the natural requirements are satisfied by III, 2; III, 1 is apparently superfluous. We may not say in this case that a further superfluity is evident in the invention of a *puer* not elsewhere used in the play, although in my opinion it is true: the *puer* of III, 1 is not the *puer* of I, 2 and III, 2. But, however that may be, the only explanation of the *puer*-scene lies in the fact that the actor who played the rôle of Pseudolus also took the part of either Ballio or the cook; it must have been the cook, for elsewhere Ballio and Pseudolus appear on the stage together. This is the assignment of rôles already made by Schmidt,² but based only on the matter of coincident appearances and harmony of rôles. The temperaments of Pseudolus and the cook are

sq. Angeredete kann der *pedisequos* sein (165 [= 170] sq., 235 [= 241] sq. u. ö.) oder ein mittlerweile aus dem Hause Getretener. Zu Gunsten des Dichters selbst möchte man daher gerne glauben, dass nicht blos 768 R., sondern die ganze Scene unächt wäre, eine spätere Schauspielerinterpolation zum Vergnügen der niedrigsten Klasse des Publicums, etwa wie in 1061-1068 [= 1079-1086]."

Philol., 35 [1876], 173: "Die Scene [III, 1] ist für die Komposition des Stückes völlig entbehrlich: zur Ausfüllung der nöthigen Pause zwischen 764 sqq., . . . und 905 . . . genügt völlig die Scene mit dem Koche III, 2."

¹ Cf. Leo in *Nachrichten d. Göttingen Ges.* (1903), 352: Der dritte Akt, die grosse Scene Ballio's mit dem Koch, ist auffallenderweise, wie Bierma S. 27 ff. richtig ausführt, nur durch ein unwesentliches Moment äusserlich mit der Handlung verbunden; wahrscheinlich hat dies Moment, die Geburtsfeier Ballio's, ursprünglich eine Bedeutung für die Handlung selbst.

² *Op. cit.*, 34.

manifestly similar, and so highly individualized as to make a different distribution difficult in a small troupe. The *puer*-scene made it possible for Pseudolus to retire in 766 and reappear as the cook in 790.

Now in this case we may put our conclusion to an immediate test. For Pseudolus appears in IV, 1, the scene immediately following the cook-scene. If the cook and Pseudolus are played by the same actor, obviously the end of III, 2 must reveal the provision made for the cook to retire and reappear in the next scene as Pseudolus. This provision is made in our texts: the cook retires in 892; Ballio speaks a monologue, 892-904; then Pseudolus appears (905).

If I am right we have discovered four passages in the plays that were provided primarily to facilitate change of rôles. The number of verses in such passages should be roughly the same, making some allowance for greater difficulties in some changes as compared with others; the figures may be of interest;¹ they serve a practical purpose in testing the secondary evidence that we have now to consider:

<i>Miles Glo.</i> 1378-93	. . .	16 vv.
<i>Capt.</i> 909-21	. . .	13 "
<i>Pseud.</i> 767-89	. . .	23 "
<i>Pseud.</i> 892-904	. . .	13 "

The fact that ten more verses were required to transform Pseudolus into the cook than to change the cook back to Pseudolus may serve to cheer the supporters of the theory that the *puer*-scene is an interpolation later than the authentic text (but cf. for the length of the passage *Most.* 408-30, below, p. 47). It is equally reasonable to assume that the second change was less difficult than the first. In any case, without

¹ The figures are of special interest in comparison with the length of the passages used by some scholars to prove the distribution of rôles in the Greek drama. In *Class. Journ.* VIII (1813), 433-5, Elmsley remarks: "It appears from these instances, that the recitation of twelve or fifteen trimeter iambs allowed an actor sufficient time to retire, to change his dress, and return." If there is any force in this correspondence (and I do not wish to be understood as committing myself to the rule of three actors in the Greek drama), the suggestions of Roemer (*Philol.*, 65 [1906], 74) are weakened by the much greater length of the intervening passages in the *Ajax* and the *Antigone*. Cf. also Rees, *op. cit.*, 50 ff., who is "guided by the situation in individual cases, . . .": he objects, however, only when less than ten verses are allowed for a change.

a careful study of style, which is beyond the scope of this paper, the question of authorship in any of these *puer*-scenes cannot be convincingly answered. I wish to note two negative facts: first, none of these passages shows any trace of Greek influence;¹ secondly, apart from the style there is nothing in the form and content of the passages that militates against a theory of interpolation by a later hand for the purpose of production under special economic conditions: on the other hand, such craftsmanship as they illustrate seems not inconsistent with the manner of Plautus as evinced in other features of his style and technique. Whether as a stage-hand or an actor in Atellan plays² Plautus probably learned the practical side of dramatic composition; his plays show that such practical requirements might very likely be met by him in a far from artistic fashion.³

IV

There are certain features common to all these *puer*-scenes: they are short; they employ a character not used elsewhere in the play; they do not advance the action; in two of the three cases they are followed by scenes that require the largest number of actors employed in any scene of the play. Obviously any other scenes that reveal *all* these features may repay study. Perhaps the question has already

¹ Cf. Leo, *Der Monolog*, 59, n. 2. Karsten, however (*Mnemos.*, 31 [1903], 154), differs with respect to the *puer*-scene in the *Pseudolus*: "Forma et res prorsus graecae sunt. Actionem fabulae pauci hi versus nihil promovent, sed neque retinent; idcirco scenam, quae respondet querelis Syncerasti in Poenulo, nec Plauto nec graeco auctore indignam esse censeo." The comparison with the *Poen.* 823 ff. is not inappropriate, but positive evidence of a Greek source is wanting; the motif of 773-4 is certainly Greek, but who shall say it is not Roman?

² Leo, *Plaut. Forsch.*, 64 ff., 72 ff.

³ I mean simply that the incoherences of the style and structure of the plays should lead us to be very cautious in ascribing to other hands parts of the plays that show a weakness in organic structure. The fact that Terence reveals nothing analogous to the *puer*-scenes may point in one of many directions: either to a difference in text-tradition, or a difference in the matter of dependence upon Greek originals, or (including the previous explanation) a difference in personality and in methods. Until the style of the *puer*-scenes is proved to be different from Plautus's I must indulge my predilection for the last explanation, with a qualification that the *puer*-scene in the *Pseudolus* is more properly suspected than the other two scenes.

arisen in the reader's mind: are there not other scenes in which a minor character, not a *puer*, appears for a short time? This is quite true, but such characters and scenes usually promote the action: for example, Halisca in *Cist.* IV, 2, the *advorsitores* in *Most.* IV, 1, 2. Other scenes fail to satisfy all the requirements, though reproducing some of the features: the *choragus*-scene in the *Curc.* IV, 1 is short, introduces a character not elsewhere used, and is a stationary scene, but the neighboring scenes show that it does not facilitate change of rôles, but simply stops a gap between the withdrawal of three characters in III, 1 and the return of the same characters in IV, 2;¹ the Lurchio-scene in the *Miles* (III, 2) satisfies most of the requirements, but it is too long to serve primarily for the change of rôles and is sufficiently explained by the contamination-theory;² the *piscatores*-scene³ in the *Rudens* (II, 1) may very likely suggest that Ptolemocratia (I, 5) and Trachalio (II, 2) were played by the same actor, but the conditions of the three scenes do not make this explanation inevitable; in the same play the *lorarii*-passage (821-838) is very suspicious, especially as so many actors are required in the next scene (III, 6), but again the explanation is not inevitable, and such *lorarii*-scenes seem rather to be for comic effect;⁴ the *convivium*-scenes opening the fifth act of the *Asinaria* and of the *Persa* incidentally, perhaps, facilitate change of rôles, but they are probably derived from Greek sources and primarily serve other purposes.⁵

¹ Leo, *Der Monolog*, 50, n. 6.

² Leo, *Plaut. Forsch.*, 166 ff.

³ Leo, *Der Monolog*, 44.

⁴ There is no evidence of whipping in this scene, but the situation and the threats probably entertained the audience; corporal punishment was clearly a source of comic effect in ancient comedy, and in the case of slaves is included among the elements which Aristophanes pretends to have banished from the comic stage (*Pax* 743 ff.) in spite of several scenes in his plays that point to the contrary.

⁵ In the *Asinaria*, V, 1, the *convivium*-scene would permit Diabolus to become Artemona, but against this combination cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, 16, 22.

In the *Persa*, V, 1, the *convivium*-scene would permit the *Virgo* to become Paegnium. This combination is not improbable; cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, 32.

In both cases the next scene requires the largest number of actors needed in any scene of the play; both scenes are stop-gaps, but the return of Dordalus in the *Persa* is not motivated as is the advent of Artemona in the *Asinaria*.

Finally, besides serving all these other purposes, the scenes are unnecessarily long for a change of rôles, and are analogous in content to ἐξοδοί in the Old Attic Comedy (Leo, *Plaut. Forsch.*, 152).

There are, however, three other passages that may properly serve as secondary evidence; if one grants that the rôles were distributed, and accepts a reasonable assignment of parts for these three plays, the scenes in question immediately become necessary and to this necessity their existence may plausibly be referred.

The admirable expository scenes of the first act of the *Mostellaria* are familiar to every student of Plautus. Philolaches, Callidamates, Philematium, Delphium are in the midst of their revelry at the end of the first act when Tranio appears with the news of the father's arrival. Act II, 1, therefore, requires five actors, the largest number required in any scene of the play. Schmidt shows that five actors might easily have carried all the rôles of the play; in this case the theory is very plausible, for none of the five characters needed in the introductory scenes reappears except Tranio and Callidamates, and the reappearance of the latter is deferred to the end of the play. The father, Theopropides, appears in II, 2; the theory requires that one of the five actors in II, 1 shall take the part of the father in II, 2. If this is the case the structure should reveal the provision made for the change of rôles. The two women leave the stage in 398; a short conversation follows between Philolaches and Tranio (398-406) in which a very trivial bit of action is developed. This action is in a sense essential: the house-door must be locked that the father may not get in and discover the revellers; it must be locked on the outside because the revellers are irresponsible, and might interfere with Tranio's plans. But this action hardly requires the attention given to it; Philolaches might have the key or secure it by giving an order to a slave within the house. Instead of this, Philolaches goes into the house; Tranio soliloquizes in the fashion of the intriguing slave¹ confident of success (409-18); a *puer* appears with the key (419); after a short dialogue, Tranio resumes his monologue (427-30); then the father appears (431). It seems reasonable to suppose that this trivial action is developed to allow Philolaches to become Theopropides, a combination for which Schmidt (p. 32) provides; the passage (408-30 = 23 vv.) is of the length required for such a change so far as the *puer*-scenes set a standard. The early

¹ Leo, *Der Monolog*, 72, n. 12, includes some of these monologues under the head of "Überlegung."

departure of the women (398) may have enabled one of them to take the part of the *puer*.¹ But the difference between this passage and the *puer*-scenes is important; here the *puer* has few words and contributes to the action; the monologue of Tranio is the conventional monologue of the arch-intriguer before he puts his plans into operation; the only suspicious feature is the trivial nature of the action. The technique is less difficult to parallel than that of the *puer*-scenes, and for that reason the evidence is somewhat less positive.

The environment of all scenes that require, according to Schmidt's assignments, the entire troupe of actors is likely to test his theory, but only in case a new character outside of the maximum number appears in the preceding or following scene. Schmidt shows that the *Mercator* could have been presented by four actors. The entire company, therefore, is required in IV, 4, in which Lysimachus, Dorippa, Syra, and a cook appear at the outset. The next scene (IV, 5) brings a fifth, Eutychus, on the stage. The structure must show some device to meet this situation. The cook and his attendants withdraw in 782; Syra leaves in 788; Dorippa leaves before 792; Lysimachus delivers a monologue, 793-802; then Syra and Eutychus appear (IV, 4). Such a structure obviously made it possible for either the cook or Dorippa to take the rôle of Eutychus; Schmidt² with some hesitation combines the rôles of Dorippa and Eutychus; in that case at least eleven verses (792-802) intervened for the change of rôles; in the other case twenty-three verses (782-802). Both harmony of rôles and the structure seem to me to point to a combination of Dorippa and the young lover, Charinus, who appears in 830; this leaves the cook and Eutychus for one actor. In this way we secure the obvious fitness of combining a woman's part and that of a sentimental lover; the combination of the audacious cook and the lover seems more difficult. At the same time by this combination of parts we allow plenty of time for changes: the cook has twenty-three verses in which to become Eutychus; Dorippa has thirty-eight verses (792-829) in which to become Charinus; the greater time required for this change is accounted for by the difficulty

¹ Fritzsche, *Quatuor leges scenicae Graecorum poeseos*, 29 ff., notes that the rôle of the *puer* might have been taken by some one of the actors who appeared in the previous scene, but does not draw any further inferences.

² *Op. cit.*, 56, cf. 30.

of shifting from the rôle of a woman to that of a man; incidentally the monologue of Syra (817-29), by this arrangement, has an economic justification in addition to the explanation furnished by the parabasis of Greek comedy and certain passages of Euripides.¹

Schmidt has not carefully worked out the important question of supernumeraries. It does not seem consistent with an economic theory to suppose that the parts of the *danista*, of the *fidicina* Acropolitis, of the *virgo* Telestis in the *Epidicus* were taken by supernumeraries; all of these characters speak a goodly number of verses; by his arrangement Schmidt brings the number of actors down to four. If we distribute these three rôles among the regular actors the troupe need be increased only to five; and in that case the structure of the play at the beginning of the fifth act becomes intelligible. Act IV, 2 presents three speaking characters; in the course of the next scene (V, 1) four additional speaking characters appear; the structure, however, easily provides for a company of five actors. Acropolitis, Periphanes, and Philippa remain on the stage through practically the entire scene (IV, 2); after their withdrawal Stratippocles and Epidicus appear and converse (607-19); then the *danista* and Telestis appear (620); the *danista* goes out in 647. The conversation, or rather the two monologues and the conversation, in 607-19 (again thirteen verses) do not advance the action or serve any other discoverable purpose than to provide for two of the actors in the previous scene to assume the rôles of Telestis and the *danista*. The possible combinations are the rôles of Acropolitis and Periphanes and Philippa² in the previous scenes with the rôles of the *danista* and Telestis in this scene; it is natural to assume that the two women, Acropolitis and Telestis, were played by one actor,³ leaving another actor the rôles of Periphanes and

¹ This monologue is rejected by Ribbeck (*Emend. Merc. Plaut. Spicilegium*, 13) and by Langen (*Plaut. Stud.*, 312) because of its unfitness and stylistic defects. Leo, however (*Plaut. Forsch.*, 107 ff.), successfully defends it as a survival of "die euripideische Klage" (*Med.* 244 ff., *Elect.* 1036 ff., *Med.* 184 ff.).

² It is to be noted that, unless there is a pause between the acts, Schmidt's combination of Philippa and Epidicus gives Philippa only an interval of six verses (604-9) in which to make the change.

³ This assumption rests on the likelihood that the parts of women were taken by one actor so far as possible; in several plays, however, there are too many women to admit of such a combination, or rather, the appearances of the women are such as to prevent this combination.

the *danista*. This provides thirteen verses for both changes. Finally, it should be noted that the departure of the *danista* in 647 provides, perhaps, for his return as Periphanes in 666 (648-65 = 18 vv.).

Doubtless other scenes of this sort might be discovered.¹ I have rejected many, and chosen these three as offering the most satisfactory secondary evidence available. They show that even as a statement of the possibilities Schmidt's arrangements may be improved by a more careful study of the structure of the plays. Such a study would be indeed audacious but for the truth revealed by the *puer*-scenes. They certainly justify the statement that the intelligent appreciation of the technique of the plays of Plautus in their present form cannot be realized without considering this phase of the dramatic production of the comedies. It is in this aspect of the problem that I have been interested; others may be willing to apply the results to their studies in dramatic antiquities or in the transmission of our text of Plautus.

¹ An investigation of the subject must start with a determination of the theory of a pause between acts; to this decision I think the *puer*-scenes make some contribution; possibly such a structure as that in the *Epidicus* also contributes — if there was a pause, why this structure? Another preliminary question concerns the use of super-numeraries; in some cases the internal structure may determine this question. When these questions are settled, the structure of scenes requiring the largest number of actors in connection with the structure of preceding and following scenes is a natural subject for investigation, but only in case the surrounding scenes require new rôles: this limits the field considerably. And any such study is hardly worth while unless the reader is convinced by the *puer*-scenes that there is a sufficient basis for a more serious consideration of the subject than Lorenz, Dziatzko, and Hauler admit.

